DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 535 PS 013 745

AUTHOR Suchorsky, Kathleen A.
TITLE Do New Parents Know What Developmental Activities Should Be Employed during Their Child's Early Years to Facilitate Reading Readiness?
PUB DATE Apr 83
NOTE 34p.; Master's Thesis, Kean College of New Jersey.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Master Theses (042) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Parent Attitudes; Parent Education; *Parent Role; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Questionnaires; *Reading Readiness; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS New Jersey

ABSTRACT

A survey questionnaire consisting of 14 multiple-choice questions was prepared in order to measure parents' knowledge in the area of reading readiness skills and to determine their views of themselves as their children's teachers. The questionnaire was distributed to 160 middle-class parents residing in New Jersey. A total of 123 responded. Questionnaires were tallied to ascertain the basic attitudes of parents toward beginning reading development, and results were analyzed to determine the informational needs of parents. It was found that many parents were ignorant of reading development activities for very young and preschool children. Approximately half of all parents erroneously thought coloring and counting contributed to reading development. One parent in four did not understand that visual stimulation, categorizing, and rhyming contribute to reading development. The vast majority of parents felt that categorizing belongs in the classroom rather than in the home. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED231535

DO NEW PARENTS KNOW WHAT DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE EMPLOYED DURING THEIR CHILD'S EARLY YEARS TO FACILITATE READING READINESS?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

A Research Study Presented to

Dr. Albert J. Mazurkiewicz

Kean College of New Jersey

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Kathleen A. Suchorsky

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

by

Kathleen A. Suchorsky

April, 1983

PS013745

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Abstract ii

II. Parental Awareness of Reading Development Activities

Introduction 1

Hypothesis 4

Definitions..... 4

Limitations 4

Results 5

Conclusions 16

III. Review of Related Literature 18

IV. Bibliography 29

ABSTRACT

A survey was prepared to measure parents knowledge in reading readiness skills and to determine their view of themselves as their children's teachers. The survey was distributed to 160 middle class parents with a response of 123. The surveys were tallied to determine informational needs of parents. Analysis of results indicated that parents are still in need of education in regard to the early age at which their children should be exposed to reading as well as what skills are important contributors to achievement.

It has been shown that there are certain activities which parents can conduct with their children from an early age which will encourage the acceptance of reading as a value and form the foundation for future interest in reading. Research studies in the past twenty years have stressed the tremendous growth potential of preschool children, and Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago states, "...in terms of intelligence measured at age seventeen, about fifty percent of the development takes place between conception and age four."

Nancy Larrick (1975) stressed that the time to begin with one's child is at the "first feeding, pampering and bathing" when the parents can sing and talk to the child. The growth of general learning abilities in preschoolers was greatly enhanced when their parents felt it was their job to teach academic skills.

Environment plays an important role in language development. Bonnie Lass (1982) found that in virtually all homes of early readers, there was an available and interested adult, a person able to answer questions about print and the child's surrounding world.

An environment conducive to learning to read was also shown to have an availability and range of printed materials. Storytime in the home is a positive factor contributing to beginning reading success. Karen Fitzpatrick (1982) points out that daily storytime in the home not only contributes to the child's future success, but also creates a healthy emotional bond between parents and

child. Parents can increase the effectiveness of storytime by:

1. Letting the child assist in holding the book in order to see the printed word and point to the pictures.
2. After the story is read, asking thought provoking questions which will aid in developing comprehension skills.
3. Using the illustrations to note important details.
4. Encouraging preschoolers to draw pictures related to what has been read and then writing under the child's picture.
5. Encouraging children to dramatize stories that are read to them for self expression.

Courtney Cazden (1972) points out that "the child must go beyond his own words and speech patterns and become familiar with the language of books." By listening to the printed word, children can develop a feel for the patterns, the flow, the nature of written language.

Potential sources for reading such as books, the labels on cans and signs are all around the developing child. Smith (1977) implies that reading and responding to this environmental print is a way by which children can come to realize the function of written language. Parents that also show a love and enjoyment of reading pose as strong positive models for their developing children.

Visual and auditory discrimination is a prerequisite to learning reading skills. If preschool children are made aware of similarities and differences among things, they will use this knowledge as they are learning to read. Karen Fitzpatrick (1982) feels parents can play an important role

in developing these skills in their everyday environment. Many activities to stimulate visual and auditory discrimination fit into a child's everyday life, such as matching, categorizing, listening and rhyming.

Durkin (1966) referred to the early readers in her New York study as "pencil and paper kids." The children developed an interest in copying objects and letters of the alphabet. This then turned into an interest in printing their own name and grew to include names of siblings, parents, pets etc. She felt an interest in reading develops from a first interest in copying and writing.

Parents are also strongly involved in how their child views himself. Students with a positive self interest tend to have higher reading achievement than those with negative self concept. Demonstrating love and affection is a strong force in developing self esteem. Encouraging preschoolers to be independent and mastering new skills gives the child a feeling of pride.

Teale (1981) stressed that the environment is not the only contributing variable in early readers. Many factors enter into the development of language. However, environment plays an intricate role. The more favorable we can make an environment towards reading, the better it will be toward fostering a desire to read in children. The purpose of this study is to determine to what degree parents are aware of these activities so that educators may endeavor to increase their knowledge where necessary.

Hypothesis

Many parents are ignorant of reading development activities for children age birth to four years old.

Definitions

Early years - birth to four years

Early readers - Durkin (1966) defined early readers as those children who have not received school instruction in reading, who are able to recognize a minimum of approximately twenty words on a word list and who read some books independently.

Developmental Activities - activities performed to foster growth in intellectual, physical or emotional areas.

Assumptions

It is assumed parents will answer the questionaire truthfully.

The questionaire will not induce a bias in the responses.

Limitations

Results of the study will be limited by the response rate of the participants.

The study will be conducted using a data gathering instrument that has not been validated.

Delimitations

Data will be gathered primarily among middle class central New Jersey parents.

Procedure

Parents of first thru third grade students were chosen for this study with an intended purpose of sampling a cross section of middle class New Jersey population with varying socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. A questionaire composed of fourteen multiple choice questions was administered to 160 parents with 123 completed and usable in this study. The surveys were tallied to ascertain the basic attitudes of parents towards beginning reading development. Results were also analyzed to determine the informational needs of parents.

Results

Survey Summary Sheet I shows responses for both male and female high school graduates. In this group the largest percent, 39%, stated that they began reading to their child regularly at one to two years of age. 42% of the population responded that the mother was the sole source of reading interaction. With regard to where reading should be taught 54% indicated in the classroom only. The average number of hours of personal reading was 7.4. Those activities that were most often indicated (above 80%) as important to reading development were alphabet, oral language interaction, easy access to printed materials, trips to the library, and spelling. Counting and coloring were seen as least important but they were still seen as relevant by 60% and 57% respectively. Visual stimulation, rhyming, categorizing and printing were seen as important by only 70% to 78% of the population.

Survey Summary Sheet I

Sex: Male & Female
Education: High School Graduate
Population: 62

1. When did you begin reading to your child reguarly?
   a. less than 6 weeks - 2% b. 6 weeks - 6 months - 4%
   c. 6 months - 1 year - 29% d. 1 year - 2 years - 39%
   e. 2 years - 4 years - 22%

2. Who performed this reading?
   a. mother - 42% b. father - 4%
   c. siblings - 0% d. mother & siblings - 11%
   e. father and siblings - 2% f. mother, father & siblings - 23%
   g. mother & father - 16%

3. Do you see yourself as a teacher of reading or does this belong in the classroom?
   a. home - 22% b. classroom - 54%
   c. home and classroom - 20%

4. Approximately how many hours do <u>you</u> personally read per week? <u>average 7.4</u>

5. For the following please indicate your opinion in regard to listsed activities by checking column one if you feel it contributes to reading development or leaving it blank if you feel it does not.

   If you feel it does contribute to reading development please check only one of the last two boxes describing it as a home activity or as a school activity.

	Does this contribute to reading development?	If So: Do you feel this should be exercised in the home:	OR: In the classroom
Visual Stimulation (Colors, motion etc.)	73%	85%	55%
Alphabet	87%	65%	73%
Oral Language Interaction (everyday speech)	87%	94%	38%
Counting	60%	90%	73%
Rhyming	78%	56%	67%
Coloring	57%	96%	47%
Categorizing (grouping by comparing and contrasting)	70%	32%	95%
Printing	77%	43%	87%
Easty Access to Printed materials	82%	82%	52%
Trips to the Library	88%	94%	33%
Spelling	87%	34%	90%

As regard to whether these activities should be conducted in the home or classroom, visual stimulation, oral language interaction, counting, coloring, easy access to printed materials and trips to the library were felt to be most appropriate as home activities with response rates between 82% and 96%. Categorizing, printing, spelling were the least likely to be performed at home with response rates ranging from 32% to 43%. Rhyming and alphabet fell somewhere in the middle receiving 56% and 65% respectively.

Survey Summary Sheet II deals with responses for female high school graduates. 41% of this group indicated they began reading regularly to their children between one and two years of age. They were split 44% and 42% respectively as to the mother or mother and father performing the regular reading. 56% of the responders indicated they viewed the classroom as their child's reading teacher. An average of 6.2 personal reading hours was noted for this group. Alphabet, oral language interaction, trips to the library and spelling were indicated as most important for reading development (89% or above). Counting and coloring (63% and 61%) were seen to least contribute to reading. While visual stimulation, rhyming, categorizing, printing, and easy access to printed materials (72% to 82%) fell somewhere in between.

Visual stimulation, oral language interaction, coloring, trips to the library were strongly regarded by

Survey Summary Sheet II

Sex: Female
Education: High School Graduate
Population: 54

1. When did you begin reading to your child reguarly?
   a. less than 6 weeks - 4% b. 6 weeks - 6 months - 6%
   c 6 months - 1 year - 33% d. 1 year - 2 years - 41%
   e. 2 years - 4 years - 17%

2. Who performed this reading?
   a. mother - 44% b. father - 0%
   c. siblings - 0% d. mother & siblings - 11%
   e. father and siblings - 4% f. mother, father & siblings - 22%
   g. mother & father - 42%

3. Do you see yourself as a teacher of reading or does this belong in the classroom?
   a. home - 24% b. classroom - 56%
   c. home and classroom - 19%

4. Approximately how many hours do you personally read per week? average 6.2

5. For the following please indicate your opinion in regard to listsed activities by checking column one if you feel it contributes to reading development or leaving it blank if you feel it does not.

   If you feel it does contribute to reading development please check only one of the last two boxes describing it as a home activity or as a school activity.

	Does this contribute to reading development?	If So: Do you feel this should be exercised in the home:	OR: In the classroom
Visual Stimulation (Colors, motion etc.)	76%	93%	54%
Alphabet	93%	68%	72%
Oral Language Interaction (everyday speech)	89%	100%	33%
Counting	63%	88%	77%
Rhyming	80%	63%	74%
Coloring	61%	94%	55%
Categorizing (grouping by comparing and contrasting)	72%	41%	92%
Printing	82%	45%	86%
Easy Access to Printed materials	82%	80%	52%
Trips to the Library	91%	100%	29%
Spelling	91%	43%	90%

mothers as home activities. Whereas categorizing, printing and spelling were seen as strong classroom responsibilites.

Survey Summary Sheet III deals with male high school graduates responses. This group was split 36% and 32% as to regular reading periods with their children at one to two years or two to four years of age. 36% saw the mother as the main source of this reading. Half of this group saw reading instruction as the responsibility of the school. This group read an average of nine hours per week for personal enjoyment. Oral language interaction, easy access to printed materials, trips to the library were seen by 82% of the population as making an important contribution to reading development. Coloring and counting again were seen as leasts contributors to reading (50% and 54%). Visual stimulation, alphabet, rhyming, categorizing, printing and spelling were viewed as moderately important (64% - 79%).

Counting and coloring were most frequently indicated as home activities (93% and 100%). Categorizing, printing and spelling were seen as the least appropriate homelactivities and strongly seen as school activities.

Male and female college graduates were summarized on Survey Summary Sheet IV. The most common periods for initiation of regular reading sessions were six months to one year and one to two years (both 37%). 39% expressed the fact that reading to the child was shared by the mother, father and siblings. They were split as to whether they saw themselves as teachers of reading or if it were the schools'

Survey Summary Sheet III

Sex: Male
Education: High School Graduate
Population: 28

1. When did you begin reading to your child reguarly?
   a. less than 6 weeks - 0% b. 6 weeks - 6 months - 0%
   c. 6 months - 1 year - 21% d. 1 year - 2 years - 36%
   e. 2 years - 4 years - 32%

2. Who performed this reading?
   a. mother - 36% b. father - 11%
   c. siblings - 0% d. mother & siblings - 11%
   e. father and siblings - 4% f. mother, father & siblings - 25%
   g. mother & father - 11%

3. Do you see yourself as a teacher of reading or does this belong in the classroom?
   a. home - 18% b. classroom - 50%
   c. home and classroom - 21%

4. Approximately how many hours do <u>you</u> personally read per week? <u>average 9 hours.</u>

5. For the following please indicate your opinion in regard to listsed activities by checking column one if you feel it contributes to reading development or leaving it blank if you feel it does not.

   If you feel it does contribute to reading development please check only one of the last two boxes describing it as a home activity or as a school activity.

	Does this contribute to reading development?	If So: Do you feel this should be exercised in the home:	OR: In the classroom
Visual Stimulation (Colors, motion etc.)	68%	68%	58%
Alphabet	75%	57%	76%
Oral Language Interaction (everyday speech)	82%	83%	48%
Counting	54%	93%	67%
Rhyming	75%	43%	52%
Coloring	50%	100%	29%
Categorizing (grouping by comparing and contrasting)	64%	11%	100%
Printing	68%	37%	89%
Easy Access to Printed materials	82%	87%	52%
Trips to the Library	82%	87%	44%
Spelling	79%	14%	91%

Survey Summary Sheet IV

Sex: Male and Female
Education: College Graduate
Population: 41

1. When did you begin reading to your child reguarly?
   a. less than 6 weeks - 0% b. 6 weeks - 6 months - 5%
   c. 6 months - 1 year - 37% d. 1 year - 2 years - 37%
   e. 2 years - 4 years - 20%

2. Who performed this reading?
   a. mother - 27% b. father - 0%
   c. siblings - 0% d. mother & siblings - 5%
   e. father and siblings - 2% f. mother, father & siblings - 39%
   g. mother & father - 34%

3. Do you see yourself as a teacher of reading or does this belong in the classroom?
   a. home - 34% b. classroom - 34%
   c. home and classroom - 29%

4. Approximately how many hours do you personally read per week? average 10 hours

5. For the following please indicate your opinion in regard to listsed activities by checking column one if you feel it contributes to reading development or leaving it blank if you feel it does not.

   If you feel it does contribute to reading development please check only one of the last two boxes describing it as a home activity or as a school activity.

	Does this contribute to reading development?	If So: Do you feel this should be exercised in the home:	OR: In the classroom
Visual Stimulation (Colors, motion etc.)	66%	93%	30%
Alphabet	93%	58%	66%
Oral Language Interaction (everyday speech)	95%	97%	23%
Counting	56%	74%	61%
Rhyming	76%	52%	61%
Coloring	44%	89%	33%
Categorizing (grouping by comparing and contrasting)	71%	35%	86%
Printing	83%	35%	79%
Easy Access to Printed materials	90%	86%	32%
Trips to the Library	93%	92%	21%
Spelling	85%	31%	83%

responsibility. Average number of personal reading hour per week was 10. Alphabet, oral language interaction, easy access to printed materials, and trips to the library were viewed as most important to reading development (90% - 95%). Visual stimulation, counting and coloring were seen as least imperative (66% - 44%). Rhyming, categorizing, printing and spelling were seen as moderately important by only 71% - 85%.

Visual stimulation, oral language interaction and trips to the library were most frequently regarded as home responsibilities (92% - 97%) and least important as classroom goals. Categorizing, printing and spelling were viewed as important to reading but not as a home activity; most (79% - 86%) felt the activities belonged in school.

Forty percent of female college graduates, as seen on Survey Summary Sheet V began reading to their children at one to two years of age, and 47% saw themselves as the main reader to their children. The home was seen by 40% to be the place reading instruction began. This group read for enjoyment 10.46 hours weekly. Alphabet, oral language development, easy access to printed materials, and trips to the library were most often (87% - 100%) viewed as important to beginning reading.

Visual stimulation, counting, coloring and categorizing were seen as least important yet they were still seen as relevant by 53% - 67% of this group. Rhyming and printing were viewed as moderately important (80%).

Survey Summary Sheet V

Sex: Female
Education: College Graduate
Population: 15

1. When did you begin reading to your child reguarly?
   a. less than 6 weeks - 0% b. 6 weeks- 6 months -13%
   c. 6 months - 1 year - 20% d. 1 year - 2 years - 40%
   e. 2 years - 4 years - 20%

2. Who performed this reading?
   a. mother - 47% b. father - 0%
   c. siblings - 0% d. mother & siblings - 0%
   e. father and siblings - 0% f. mother, father & siblings - 20%
   g. mother & father - 33%

3. Do you see yourself as a teacher of reading or does this belong in the classroom?
   a. home - 40% b. classroom - 20%
   c. home and classroom - 33%

4. Approximately how many hours do <u>you</u> personally read per week? <u>average 10.46 hours</u>

5. For the following please indicate your opinion in regard to listsed activities by checking column one if you feel it contributes to reading development or leaving it blank if you feel it does not.

   If you feel it does contribute to reading development please check only one of the last two boxes describing it as a home activity or as a school activity.

	Does this contribute to reading development?	If So: Do you feel this should be exercised in the home:	<u>OR</u>: In the classroom
Visual Stimulation (Colors, motion etc.)	67%	100%	50%
Alphabet	87%	62%	85%
Oral Language Interaction (everyday speech)	93%	100%	36%
Counting	53%	100%	75%
Rhyming	80%	67%	58%
Coloring	53%	100%	38%
Categorizing (grouping by comparing and contrasting)	67%	50%	100%
Printing	80%	33%	100%
Easy Access to Printed materials	87%	100%	39%
Trips to the Library	100%	100%	20%
Spelling	80%	33%	100%

As to whether these activities are home responsibilities or best handled in the classroom, visual stimulation, oral language interaction, counting, coloring, easy access to printed materials and trips to the library were seen by 100% of the population as home activities. In regard to these same activities only counting was seen as also a classroom activity by 75%, the other activities were viewed only by 20% - 39% as being appropriate for school. Printing and spelling were viewed as inappropriate for the home but 100% felt both were school responsibilities. Alphabet, rhyming and categorizing fell somewhere in the middle with 50% - 60% feeling these are home activities.

Survey Summary Sheet VI deals with male college graduate responses. The most common age among these men at which to begin regular reading sessions was six months to one year. In this group, 38% said the reading was shared between mother, father and siblings. The largest portion of this group (42%) saw the classroom as the child's reading teacher. They read an average of 9.6 hours per week. Alphabet, oral language interaction, easy access to printed materials, trips to the library, and spelling were seen as most important to reading development (89% - 98%). Counting and coloring were scored as least likely to contribute to reading even though 39% - 58% still felt they had value. Visual stimulation, rhyming, categorizing, and printing were thought to be of moderate value (65% - 85%).

Designating activities as home or school, visual stimulation, oral language interaction, and trips to the

Survey Summary Sheet VI

Sex: Male
Education: College Graduate
Population: 26

1. When did you begin reading to your child reguarly?
   a. less than 6 weeks - 0% b. 6 weeks - 6 months - 0%
   c. 6 months - 1 year - 46% d. 1 year - 2 years - 35%
   e. 2 years - 4 years - 19%

2. Who performed this reading?
   a. mother - 15% b. father - 0%
   c. siblings - 0% d. mother & siblings - 8%
   e. father and siblings - 4% f. mother, father & siblings - 38%
   g. mother & father - 35%

3. Do you see yourself as a teacher of reading or does this belong in the classroom?
   a. home - 31% b. classroom - 42%
   c. home and classroom - 27%

4. Approximately how many hours do you personally read per week? average 9.6 hours

5. For the following please indicate your opinion in regard to listsed activities by checking column one if you feel it contributes to reading development or leaving it blank if you feel it does not.

   If you feel it does contribute to reading development please check only one of the last two boxes describing it as a home activity or as a school activity.

	Does this contribute to reading development?	If So: Do you feel this should be exercised in the home:	OR: In the classroom
Visual Stimulation (Colors, motion etc.)	65%	88%	18%
Alphabet	96%	56%	56%
Oral Language Interaction (everyday speech)	96%	96%	16%
Counting	58%	60%	53%
Rhyming	73%	42%	63%
Coloring	39%	80%	30%
Categorizing (grouping by comparing and contrasting)	73%	26%	79%
Printing	85%	36%	68%
Easy Access to Printed materials	92%	79%	29%
Trips to the Library	89%	87%	22%
Spelling	89%	30%	74%

library were viewed most strongly as home activities (87% - 96%). These same activities were scored very low as school responsibilities (18% - 22%). Rhyming, categorizing, printing, and spelling were perceived primarily as classroom activities (63% - 79%).

Conclusions and Implications

The results of the study support the hypothesis that many parents are ignorant of reading development activities for children of age birth to four years. The study showed that approximately half of all parents erroneously thought coloring and counting contributed to reading development. The high response levels of activities which rightfully contributed to reading development are called into question by the large number of responders who indiscriminately checked all the activities. It should be noted that roughly one parent in four did not recognize that visual stimulation, categorizing and rhyming contribute to reading development. The results also indicate the vast majority of parents feel that categorizing belongs in the classroom rather than the home. This may be due to parents feeling ill equipped as educators and failing to realize that much of the everyday environment can be used as a teaching device.

The implications for parenting courses, pre-school PTA-PTO conferences, printed materials to be given to parents of the newly born, etc., are obvious from these results and conclusions. Important improvements in

readiness for school can be achieved by providing appropriate instruction in various ways, or information via mass media, to parents or parents-to-be.

Review of Related Literature

Research studies have stressed the growth potential that preschool children have. Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago states, "in terms of intelligence measured at age seventeen about fifty percent of the development takes place between conception and age four." (Karen Fitzpatrick 1982).

Nancy Dunn (1981) studied forty all white children and their parents. Childrens ages ranged from 57 to 69 months, with a mean of 62.73 months. Fifteen of the children were girls, while 25 were boys. Mothers had a mean of 13.71 years of education (range of 12 - 18 years) while fathers had a mean of 14.71 years (range of 11 - 20 years). Of the forty mothers, 29 did not work, nine were working between sixteen and twenty-four hours per week, and only two were working forty hours or more per week. All of the children came from intact families and were approximately equally divided among first-, second-, and third-, or later borns.

The purpose of this study was to answer questions dealing with parental teaching philosophies, and how parental beliefs related to children's achievement. The data collection procedure consisted of three stages;

1. The nursery school teacher completed rating forms and provided scores on standardized tests.
2. Parent interviews.
3. Mother diary information.

Children who learned verbal skills by more informal methods (eg. reading road signs, writing captions on drawings) seemed to learn the skills to the same level of complexity as children taught didactically, whereas mastering complex numbers skills such as written addition require more formal instruction. When mothers felt that it was their job to teach academic skills, their children did score higher on verbal and math skills checklists. Children of mothers who responded postively to the academic skills items also scored higher on the cognitive-abilities.

When fathers felt that it was their job to teach academic skills, their children scored higher on problem - solving skills such as instructions and persistence. Fathers said they were making an effort to teach problem solving skills. This may be due to their working away from the home. This causes them to spend the time they have with their children in non-routine activities. Dunn (1981) feels it to be most critical for children's achievement at school-entry age that their parents believe themselves to be teachers of their children.

Whitfield (1980) links reading achievement with degrees of sex-role stereotyping among boys. According to this study as boy's degrees of sex-role stereotyping rise, their reading achievement scores decrease. Gross (1978) found when children were treated equally there was no difference in reading performance according to the sex of the child.

Sex-role perceptions develop in the home and can be perpetuated in school. Fathers can make an important

contribution to their child's reading future by setting an example that reading is for many purposes, for pleasure, information, following directions and learning. Children need to be aware that reading for both men and women is a vital part of everyone's life.

Bonnie Lass (1982) in her study of her own son's awareness of print and learning to read stressed that there should be an interested adult at an infant's disposal. The infant can use this person to answer questions about print and things in his/her world. Durkin (1966) and Krippner (1963) also comment on the important effect of answering questions about letters, words and reading had on early readers.

Smith (1973) stresses that the child is the one who determines the type and amount of help needed. The main emphasis should be on the quality of interaction between child and parent who is actually giving his/her child individualized reading instruction.

Fitzpatrick (1982) reminds us of the positive relationship between self concept and reading achievement. Students with a more positive self concept tend to have higher reading achievement than students with negative self concepts. Parents strongly influence the children's feelings toward themselves by the importance they place on their child's inquisitiveness and academic curiousity.

Parents set the stage for their preschooler's future academic success. The child's environment plays an important role in fostering an interest to read.

Fitzpatrick (1982) feels the home that fosters an interest in reading does so by creating an environment that places a high priority on printed words. Some suggestions she has for creating such an environment are:

1. Parents can set an example by reading themselves and then discussing what they have read with each other.
2. Books should be available to the child and trips to the library will increase the number of books in the home.
3. Children enjoy having a bookcase of their own.
4. The television should be limited or eliminated.

Durkin (1966) points out in her California and New York studies the easy availability of materials for children as a positive influence in a child's environment. Durkin also pointed out the range of printed materials was not confined only to books. Margaret Clark (1976) stated that early reading experiences for some children were in books from which they enjoyed stories, and yet for others the print in their every day environment played an important role. "This was particularly true of the boys who showed interest in sign-posts, car names, captions on television and names of products at the supermarket."

John Carroll (1968) warns us that even though a child's environment may be full of printed stimuli, we must make sure they are interpreted for the child. Understanding the function of written language is greatly facilitated when the variety of printed materials is accompanied by interpretation (Teal 1981). Smith (1977) states that reading/responding to environmental print is the basic way

children come to realize the function of written language. He states:

> I can think of only one way in which the first insight that print is meaningful might be achieved and this is when a child is read to or observes print being responded to in a meaningful way. At this point I am not referring to the reading of books or stories, but to the occasions when a child is told or hears "That sign says "Stop", "That word is Boy", "This is the jar for candies", or "There's the bus for downtown". Television comercials can do the same for a child, they not only announce the product's name, desirability and uniqueness in spoken and written language but even demonstrate the product at work. (pp. 6 - 7)

Even though environmental print makes the child aware of the function of print, books and stories serve this purpose too. Teale (1981) stresses that reading narrative or other types of prose to children not only introduces children to the function of print but also sensitizes children to the structure and nature of written language. Written language and oral language differ in vocabulary, syntax, and degree explicitness, conciseness and abstractness. Children must come to understand the "language of books" and listening to prose being read is one means of developing this understanding.

Flood (1977) investigated the relationship between "parental style" in reading and the child's performance on certain "pre-reading related tasks". He concluded that a reading style that results in the most benefits for a child is one in which there is verbal interaction between parent and child. He recommended that the child be involved in reading through:

1. Warm up questions which prepare the child for reading.

2. Verbal interaction during reading which relates story content to past experiences.

3. Positive reinforcement.

4. Post-story evaluative questioning.

Karen Fitzpatrick (1982) suggests strategies parents might utilize to increase the effectiveness of story times are:

1. Let the child hold the book in order to see the printed word and point to the pictures.

2. Ask thought provoking questions after the story is read.

3. Use illustrations to note important details and ask questions about the illustrations in a story.

4. Encourage preschoolers to draw pictures related to what has been read and then write under the picture the meaning attached to the picture by the child. If the pictures are put into booklet form the preschooler will have his/her own picture book.

5. Encourage children to dramatize stories that are read to them so they will have a vehicle for self-expression.

Story time in many homes is a daily routine which contributes to the child's future academic success but it also creates a healthy bond between parents and child.

The Veterans Upward Bound Program set up a pilot program on the theme "Read to Your Child". Some of the projects goals were to develop reading skills by providing an opportunity to practice reading, to place fathers in the role of teacher and reader in order to help the child see

that reading is important to the parents, to develop the veteran's self-confidence and skill in oral reading, and to stimulate the experience of enjoying books and conversation between father and children. After only the first week the Vet's rarely took home only one book. Each participant usually read four to six books a week. Only one father stated that it was more of a chore than a pleasure to spend time with the children. The children were pleased with the project and older children in the families requested "good" books at their reading level (Virginia B. Brubaker and Edward C. Keiser 1982).

Susan Slovin-Ela and R. Kohen-Ras (1978) tested infants four and seven months old, from disadvantaged and middle-class homes and from institutions for various reaching and manipulation responses to a static and moving red ring. Results showed that at each age level infants from middle-class homes had more developed reaching and manipulating responses than infants in unstimulating disadvantaged homes and institutions, demonstrating that the developmental lag of disadvantaged and institutionalized infants can be detected as early as four months. The groups were tested in their homes, where the examiner was able to observe the living conditions of the families. Striking discrepancies in care and style of socialization between the middle and lower-class families was noted.

A large amount of visual stimuli was found in middle-class homes. The bed of the infant and his room were usually decorated with pictures and toys. Generally the

room was clean, neat and well lighted. The mother talked to her infant and showed interest in the infants development. The infants were clean neatly dressed, alert and interested in their environment. The infant was usually found in a playpen or infant seat near other family members.

The disadvantaged homes appeared quite different. There were very few toys and the infants room was dark, musty, and piled high with dirty laundry of sibling(s) who shared the room. The infant was usually found unkept lying in their crib. On the whole, the infants were pale, and apathetic and very passive to the testing session. There did not seem to be any significant amount of interaction between mothers and infants.

The institutionalized group was characterized by a lack of individualized care and lack of mental, motor, and social stimulation. The infants were clean and physically well cared for. They lacked social and intellectual stimulation. Generally they were spoken to only when fed or changed.

Results of this study demonstrated at four months a lag in the development of reaching, grasping and manipulative responses as well as in vocalizational and resistance to distraction in socioeconomically disadvantaged and institutionalized infants. However, by seven months all disadvantaged and institutionalized infants had developed the reaching behaviors present in middle-class infants at four months, thus indicating that sociocultural factors may change the rate of development but not its course.

Even though the ill-effects of cultural and educational neglect did not produce a change in the sequence of developmental stages in the motor skills tested, it did cause considerable delay. It was also shown that middle-class babies vocalized more than the rest of the group, institutionalized babies scoring lowest. However, as reading teachers we are aware of the importance of vocal interaction and oral development of infants for future reading success.

Oral language is viewed by some as basic to later acquision of reading and writing (Entwistel 1971). Nancy Larrick (1975) stresses that oral language development begins "with the first feeding, pampering, and bathing" when the parent's singing or chanting and gentle conversation begin to set the stage for the infants participation. Fitzpatrick (1982) stressed the best way a parent can foster communication and listening skills is by taking advantage of the present moment. Since oral language is so important for daily living, a parent who develops these skills is contributing to their child's future success. Some techniques that will assist parents are:

1. Encourage preschoolers to talk about their experiences.
2. Ask the child to describe an object that is in his/her line of vision.
3. Show an action picture and ask what is happening in the picture.
4. Questions should be answered in complete sentences.

Durkin (1966) found that interest in writing often preceded or appeared to cause an interest in reading.

> Almost without exception the starting point of curiosity about written language was an interest in scribbling and drawing. From this developed interest in copying objects and letters of the alphabet. When a child was able to copy letters - not all of the children who had the interest developed the skill - his almost inevitable request was, "Show me my name".
>
> Many parents also told of how a child's interest in his own name grew to include interest in copying the names of parents siblings, other relative and friends, and sometimes pets. Here, too, it appeared that interest in copying led to long-term and seemingly, intense projects which included for example, the making and remaking of calendars and address books. What all of this emphasized is that pre-school interest in reading very often develops from a prior interest in copying and writing. (p. 108)

Bonnie Lass' son Jed also showed an interest in writing even though he didn't use crayons or pencils etc., his parents were used as writing instruments. At twenty months he began to go over completed pages in his pad, recite letters and scribble over them with crayons.

Special skills of visual and auditory discrimination were also cited as prerequisites to learning to read. A child who had difficulty seeing likenesses and differences in letters and words will have difficulty in learning a sight vocabulary. Fitzpatrick (1982) feels that parents can help their children develop these skills through everyday activities, such as:

1. Matching blocks by colors, shapes and sizes.
2. Sort out groceries by categories.

3. Circle letters of his/her name found in newspapers or magazines.

Training in auditory discrimination can be provided by parents taking advantage of the old nursery rhymes that fit into daily routines (Nancy Larrick 1975). Listening to various sounds in the environment, matching objects that begin with the same sound. Karen Fitzpatrick (1982) feels that assisting children in developing auditory discrimination will not only help them with beginning reading but also makes them conscious of the importance of listening skills in our society.

Many factors influence the child learning to read. However, environment plays an intricate role. The more favorable we can make an environment towards reading, the better it will be toward fostering a desire to read in children.

Bibliography

Brubaker, Virginia and Keiser, Edward, Veterans Upward Bound Program, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio, Journal of Reading, April 1982, pp 693-694.

Carroll, J. "Some Neglected Relationships in Reading and Language Learning." Elementary English, Volume 43, 1966 pp 577-582.

Clark, M., "Young Fluent Readers". Heinemann Educational Books, 1976

Dunn, Nancy E. "Children's Achievement as School-Entry Age as a Function of Mother's and Father's Teaching Sets", The Elementary School Journal, Volume 81, Number 4, 1981, pp 245-254.

Durkin, D. "A Study of Children Who Learned to Read Prior to First Grade", California Journal of Educational Research, Volume 10, 1959, pp 109-113.
"Children Who Read Early", New York: Teachers College Press, 1966.

Entwistle, D. "Language, Socialization and Reading" Reading Research Quarterly, Volume 7, 1971, pp 111-167.

Fitzpatrick, Karen "Attention Parents: Your Pre-School Child and Reading", Reading Improvement, Volume 19, Spring 1982, pp 50-53

Flood, J. "Parental Styles in Reading Episodes with Young Children", The Reading Teacher, Volume 31 1977, pp 864-867.

Gross, Alice "Sex-Role Standards and Reading Achievement: A Study of an Israeli Kibbutz System", The Reading Teacher, Volume 32, Nov. 1978, pp 149-157.

Krippner, S. "The Boy Who Read at 18 Months", Exceptional Children, Volume 30, October 1963, pp 105-109.

Larrick, Nancy, "Home Influence on Early Reading", Today's Education, Volume 64, November 1975 pp 77-79.

Lass, Bonnie, "Portrait of My Son as an Early Reader", The Reading Teacher, October 1982, pp 20-28.

Slovin-Ela, Susan and Kohen-Raz, R. "Developmental Differences in Primary Reaching Responses of Young Infants from Varying Social Backgrounds" Child Development, Volume 49, 1978, pp 132-140.

Smith, F. "Twelve Easy Ways to Make Learning to Read Difficult (and one difficult way to make it easy)", Psycholinguistics and Reading New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.

Teale, William, "Positive Environment for Learning to Read: What Studies of Early Readers Tell Us" Language Arts, Volume 55, Number 8 December 1981, pp 922-931.
"Parents Reading to Their Children: What We Know and Need to Know", Language Arts, Volume 58, Number 8, December 1981.

Whitfield, Edie and Whitfield, Charles, "Sex-Role Stereotyping and Reading Readiness", Childhood Education, May/June 1982, pp 298-299.